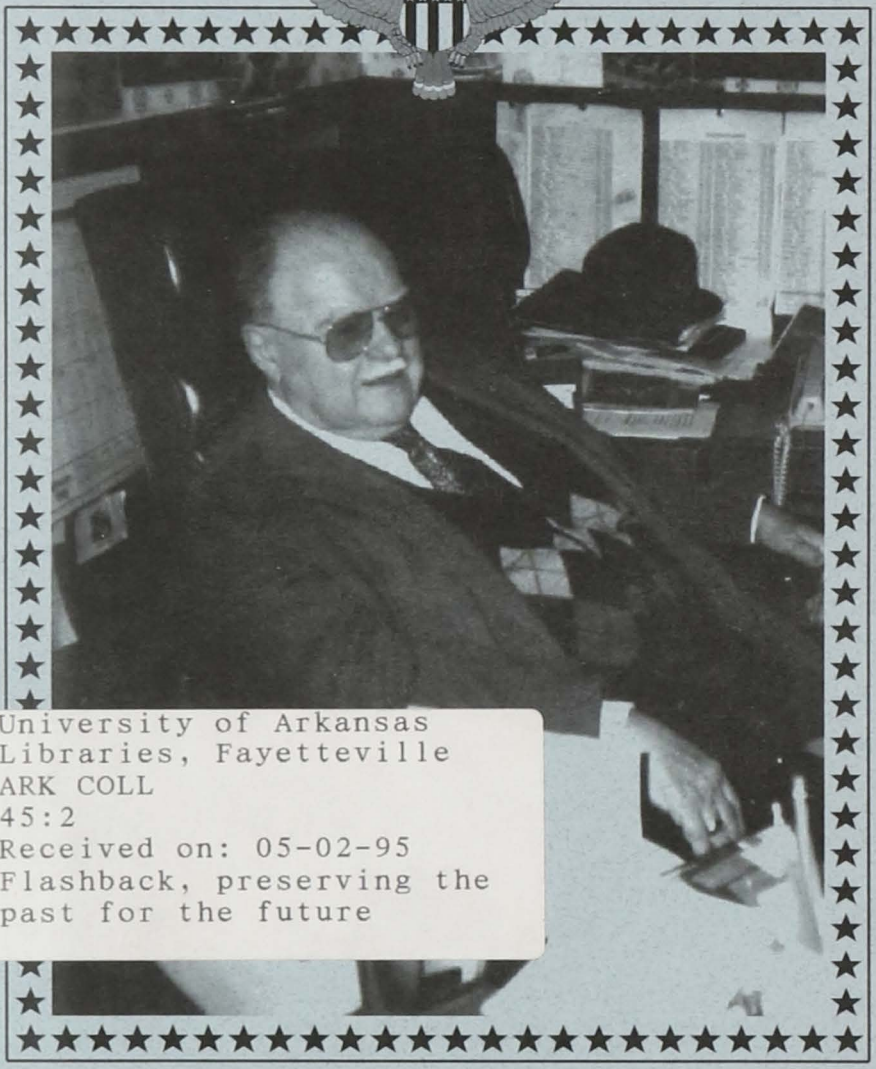
FLASHBACK

Preserving the Past for the Future

Volume 45 May 1995 Number 2



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Flashback, preserving the
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Published by

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Washington County Historical Society
118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701

Flashback is published quarterly in February, May, August and November. Send all material for publication to the Editor at 118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701. There is no payment for articles published in *Flashback*. The Editor retains the right to edit all submitted articles prior to publication.

Membership is invited of those interested in the preservation of Washington County's history. Dues are discretionary, starting with $10 annually and rising to $150 for a life membership. Donations, tax deductible according to current law, are gratefully received any time for special projects. Members are mailed *Flashback* every quarter. Past issues cost $5 each, current year's issues, $4 each.

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Cover photo: John William Murphy, Fayetteville attorney and member of the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion in World War II.

John William Murphy

2nd MARINE RAIDER BATTALION

January 25, 1995 was John William Murphy's 70th birthday. Friends from all over Arkansas, along with many out-of-staters, gathered in the Fayetteville Hilton to roast and toast him for his good works, many connected with veterans associations and organizations, from local to national influence, applauding, too, his lifelong performance as a true friend and a professional who practices criminal law.

Typically, his celebration on March 12, 1995 at the Hilton was a fund-raiser to benefit the American Legion baseball program for local boys. Also typically, it was a huge success enjoyed by all.

The following tells of Murphy's World War II experiences with the Marines. He served with the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion, a special group of fighting men under Lt. Col. Evans F. Carlson, with Major James Roosevelt, the president's son, as second in command.

There were only four Raider battalions with 600-700 men in each group. Their original mission was to attack the Japs from the rear, reconnoiter, seize valuable intelligence, and in general harass the enemy to distraction as aid to the regular marines when they made a frontal assault on a fixed island position.

Raiders' special equipment included the "Ka-Bar", a knife issued to the troops in the South Pacific on 27 January 1943. Overall length was 12" with its balance a

little more than an inch back of the guard. It was used for hammering and as a light machete for cutting vines and brush. It was a most efficient hand-to-hand combat weapon. It is still standard issue to U. S. Marines.

GUNG HO was the motto of the Raiders. Its translation from Chinese is "work together". The shoulder patch with the skull and five stars developed for the Raiders was based on the Southern Cross constellation and was the only U. S. force to have an authorized death's head for its insignia.

Long after Raiders led the way,
Gung Ho will never die;
Still heard today from jungle scenes,
Two words, immortalized . . .

From the song "Gung Ho" by Raider H. E. LeBlanc

These troops were the first to use camouflaged issue uniform. There were special boots and shoes for use on certain terrains, marshlands, sandy or rocky places, and rubber-soled athletic shoes for use on submarines. Many landings were effected by using rubber assault boats floated off submarines. They also had WWI grenade vests for carrying extra ammunition clips and grenades into the field.

Raider weaponry had more firepower per man than the standard Marine outfit. The squad leader of a three-man fire team carried an M-1, the second guy armed himself with a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), and the third operated a Thompson submachine gun. Murphy was the BAR man.

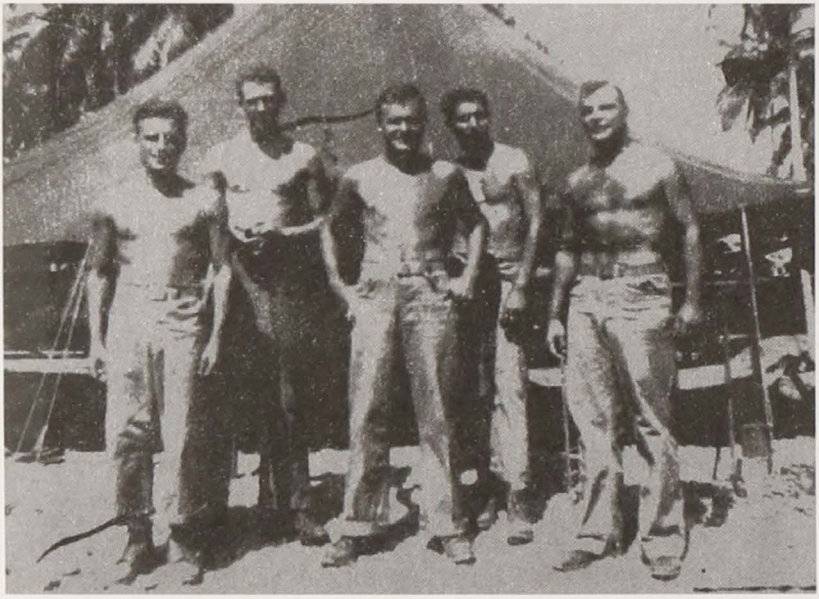
Standard issue was a .45 automatic pistol sidearm, although there were plenty of .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolvers. M-1 carbines and Reising guns were also issued.

Unusual for use by Raiders was the "elephant gun" (the Canadian Boys .55 caliber anti-tank gun developed by Canadian forces). It weighed in at 36 pounds.

The Thompson submachine gun was a favorite piece because it was rugged and reliable.

The 12-gauge shotgun was also popular in the jungle. It had devastating fire power in case of an ambush, especially liked by the point man on patrol.

The Raiders were all volunteers for special duty, but so were all Marines–volunteers. Because of this enlistment similarity, the regular Marines felt some animosity toward the Raiders: why should these four outfits be singled out as unique? Actually, the raiders carried this distinction for about two years, at which point they were absorbed into regular units. Their special training was utilized in jungle conditions when the armed forces were island-hopping in 1942-44.



Some of the 2nd Battalion Marine Raiders at Guadalcanal, left to right: ___ Hignell, ___ Jewell, John William Murphy, ___ Turner, and Peter Terfinko.

Bill Murphy's elementary and secondary education were completed in Fayetteville. At 17, he finished high school and enlisted in the U. S. Marine Corps. He went through boot camp at San Diego, Calif., and chose to join the corps' special organization for hit-and-run operations behind Japanese lines.

Murphy's service was with the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion until his honorary discharge because of wounds sustained at Guam. Incidentally, one of his commanding officers was Capt. William Enfield from Bentonville, Ark., who, after discharge, became a well-known attorney and respected judge in Benton County.

After the 2nd Battalion Makin Raid (August 17-18, 1942), the men's dog tags were taped to belts or carried so the tinkling noise from a chain around the neck would never give away a man's position on patrol.

PFC Murphy got into action as a replacement at Bougainville, largest island of the Solomon group (nearly 30 miles wide and 125 miles long). D-Day was November 1, 1943. It was in action there that a companion Marine, Jim Regal, was knocking out pill boxes when he was killed. Bill stayed down to survive when four days later a chaplain saw him and informed him that Regal had been buried as PFC Murphy down on the beach. Murph was greatly relieved by that error.

It was later, on Guam in the fall of 1944, that Bill received his million dollar reprieve: so badly wounded that he had to be evacuated to the States was the evaluation, plus a Purple Heart given to Murphy for his wounds.

He was found bleeding badly in a field that had been overrun by the Japanese just a short time before. The enemy retreated back over the same ground with Marines in hot pursuit. Father Paul J. Redmond, a Catholic priest, discovered Bill after several hours. The

Recovering at Aeia Naval Hospital in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1944, left to right: ___ MacKowskie, ___ Litovitch, Robert O'Keefe, and John William Murphy.

Father gave him morphine and had him sent to the rear where some of his blood loss was replaced by plasma. This badly shot-up Marine was sent by ship to Aeia Naval Hospital in Honolulu, Hawaii for a nine-month recovery before discharge back to Arkansas.

Bill's involvement in many state and national organizations, plus his law practice, has been instrumental in keeping him very community-minded and active.

His most recent appointment came from President Clinton to serve on the World War II Memorial Advisory Board. This Board consists of twelve veterans who represent all regions of the country and span ages twenty-something to eighty-something, working toward keeping the public aware of the sacrifices which have been made by so many to *keep America FREE! "Lest we Forget."*

★★★★★★★★★

Cynthia M. Keezer, 2662 Linda Ln., Poplar Bluff, MO 63901. **SAMUEL GUTHRIE,** b. in Pennsylvania in 1775. m. **JUDITH CARTER** in Virginia. Came to Washington Co. Ark. in 1819. Lived in Hempstead Co. 1828. Believe he died before 1847. Did he have children? Did **SAMUEL** marry a second time? Want any information about **SAMUEL** in Arkansas, and/or his descendants, if any.

Nancy Maxwell, 7793 E. Elk Creek Rd., Tucson, AZ 85715-7033. As a member of WCHS, I am writing to inform you of the efforts of Bob Pyeatt of Springfield, Mo. to protect and preserve the historic **PYEATT-MASON CEMETERY** in Maumelle, Ark.

Bob, as well as my half-sister-in-law, is a descendant of **JAMES PYEATT,** who with his brother **JACOB** was one of the earliest settlers of Pyeattstown in the Maumelle area of present-day Pulaski County around 1811. Jacob and many of Jame's descendants came on to Washington Co. in 1828, but James remained in Pyeattstown and was buried in 1834 in what is now Pyeatt-Mason Cemetery. The cemetery is endangered by new home construction. Bob Pyeatt visited Maumelle in November 1994 and took pictures of the damaged done to several gravestones by a backhoe. He has contacted the Pulaski Co. sheriff's office about this disturbance but has not received a response.

Since Washington Co. was settled by many former residents of the Maumelle Area, their descendants may want to speak up in defense of this unique piece of early Arkansas history. Please inform your readers that the

Pyeatt-Mason Cemetery is a vital part of Arkansas history that deserves to be preserved and protected.

Mary Jane Draeger, 315 Douglass Ave., Waukesha, WI 53186. **DAVID FRANKLIN ALEXANDER** 1830 - 1930; **HENRY CLAYTON ALEXANDER** Might have been in Crawford Co., Ark.; **CHARLES ALEXANDER,** lived in Winslow, Ark.; **ISAAC ALEXANDER** born in Ohio; **MARY ELIZABETH LANE** b. in KY 1831 Dec.; **PENDLETON,** KY to ILL, some to California.

A. Earl Griffith, 12223 E. 38 St., Tulsa, OK 74146-3113. In the 1870 census of Washington Co. Ark., White River Township, family number 147/170, lists **J. A. GRIFFITH,** female, 33 years of age, with three daughters and three sons ranging in age from 3 years to 14 years. In the Franklin Co., Ark. court records, on 21 April 1871, it says that Probate Judge George W. Strickland married **LEWIS WILLIAMS** and **JULIA A. B. GRIFFITH.** According to a family bible record created by one of the older daughters, **JULIA** died in October 1871. The children were found living with other families in the 1880 census. **JULIA** is my great grandmother. It was only this last summer, while I was in Fayetteville for the 4-Corners Ancestor Fair, that I found a reference to this marriage while doing some research at the Fayetteville library. Who is this **LEWIS WILLIAMS**? Any help will be greatly appreciated.

Lucille Bailey, 9948 Lull St., Burbank CA 91504-1023. Would appreciate exchange of information on any of these names: **NEWMAN, SHANNON,** (KY, AR) **BAILEY** (TN, AL, AR), **MANSFIELD** (MO, TN, KY, KS), **OLIVER** (TN, AR), **BENSON** (NC), **KING** (NC, KY, AR), **HOLLY** (VA). I have information on **NEWMAN** 1870 to 1990, have lots on **BAILEY** and **SHANNON**. Need spouses and children. Very little on **OLIVER, BENSON, HOLLY.**

New Announcements

The **HERRINGTON REUNION** will take place from 11am - 4pm Saturday, June 3rd at the Huntsville Community Center. Those attending should bring a covered dish. Also, bring your recipes for a cookbook.

The **GABBARD REUNION** will be Saturday, June 8th from 11am - 4pm at the Huntsville Community Center. Those attending should bring a covered dish. Also, bring your recipes.

The **CLASSMATES REUNION** will be the last Saturday, September 30th. Make your plans to attend from 10am - 4pm at the Huntsville Community Center. *Virginia Threet, 1875 S. Custer Ln., Fayetteville AR 72701-6774, telephone: (501) 521-6459*

From the Readers

In reference to the story of "The Willhites" in Feb. '95 "Flashback", by Laverne Willhite Hicks. I would like to update you on Lt. Thomas Wilhite.

I received a letter yesterday from a great nephew of Thomas Wilhite. He states that Thomas Wilhite was shot down in a field in front of his home by a Confederate raiding party in full view of his mother and sister. After Thomas was killed, a mounted company of Confederates led his father, Hiram Wilhite, away on foot with a rope around his neck. I believe that this is probably the way that Thomas died. The letter I received stated that his grandmother was the sister who witnessed the killing.

Laverne Willhite Hicks
309 W Kibler Hwy
Van Buren AR 72956

The Van Winkle Hotel

A Fayetteville Showplace When it Opened in 1880

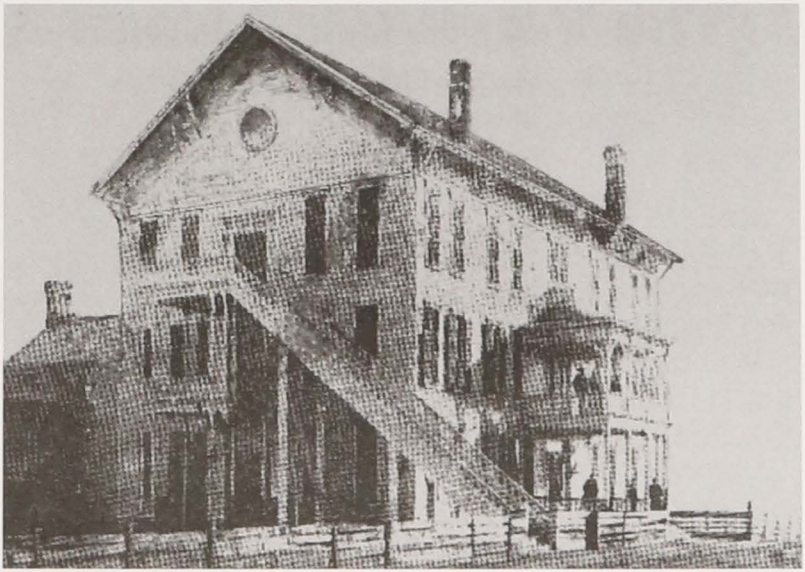
By Pat Donat

Fayetteville removed the scars of the Civil War by rapidly replacing the structures destroyed with larger and better buildings. By the time the 1870s were coming to a close about 30 buildings had been erected in the town in a six month period. Among these were the Van Winkle Hotel on the north side of Center Street.

In November of 1879 the editor of the *Fayetteville Democrat* commented on the growth and said the south side of the square had been paved "all along its business fronts."

At the end of that month he noted the "The frame of the Van Winkle house is rapidly going up. We are having the soles of our brogans well greased in preparation for the grand house warming when Jack moves in." Jack was Capt John B. Steele, who managed the hotel for some three years for his father-in-law, builder Peter Van Winkle.

In February of 1880 it was reported that Mr. Peter Van Winkle "the boss mill man of the Southwest" was up to inspect the work on his big house. Land between College and East Street on Center had been acquired by Van Winkle before the Civil War. In the same issue a local item stated: "Nearly every carpenter in the town and painter in the country are now at work on the Van Winkle House. It will be at least a month yet before the building is completed. That wide-awake, go-a-head, whoop em up and good fellow generally, Jim Blackburn, is bossing this little army of workmen. The third story of the house will be used as a public hall and will be the



From Van Winkle book by Marilyn Hicks. Used by permission.

largest hall in the State. A rousing old dance is in contemplation when Capt. Steele moves in. An old Virginia reel will head the programme and 'Uncle Peter' will be expected to lead the column of merry shufflers."

As he did, but not until June of that year and not before the newly built hotel escaped serious damage in the tornado of April 18, 1880 and a disastrous fire on May 26 of the same year.

There are several first hand descriptions of the Van Winkle, variously referred to as the Van Winkle House and the Van Winkle Hotel. The "large three-story frame building" was located on the north side of Center Street in Block 15. The Sanborn Insurance map of 1886 shows an outside stairway leading to the third floor. A dining room and kitchen were shown in a one story wing, at the north of the hotel proper. In addition, nearby was a separate building for the hotel laundry. Two dwellings and a grocery store at the corner of East and Center, two

small unidentified buildings north on East Street and a Roller Skating Rink at the corner of Meadow and College, completed the buildings in the block at that time. The hotel was situated back from the street on a landscaped lot.

The first two floors were used as hotel rooms and if the 1898-1899 hotel register lists all of them there were 33 rooms and a parlor available for use of the traveling public.

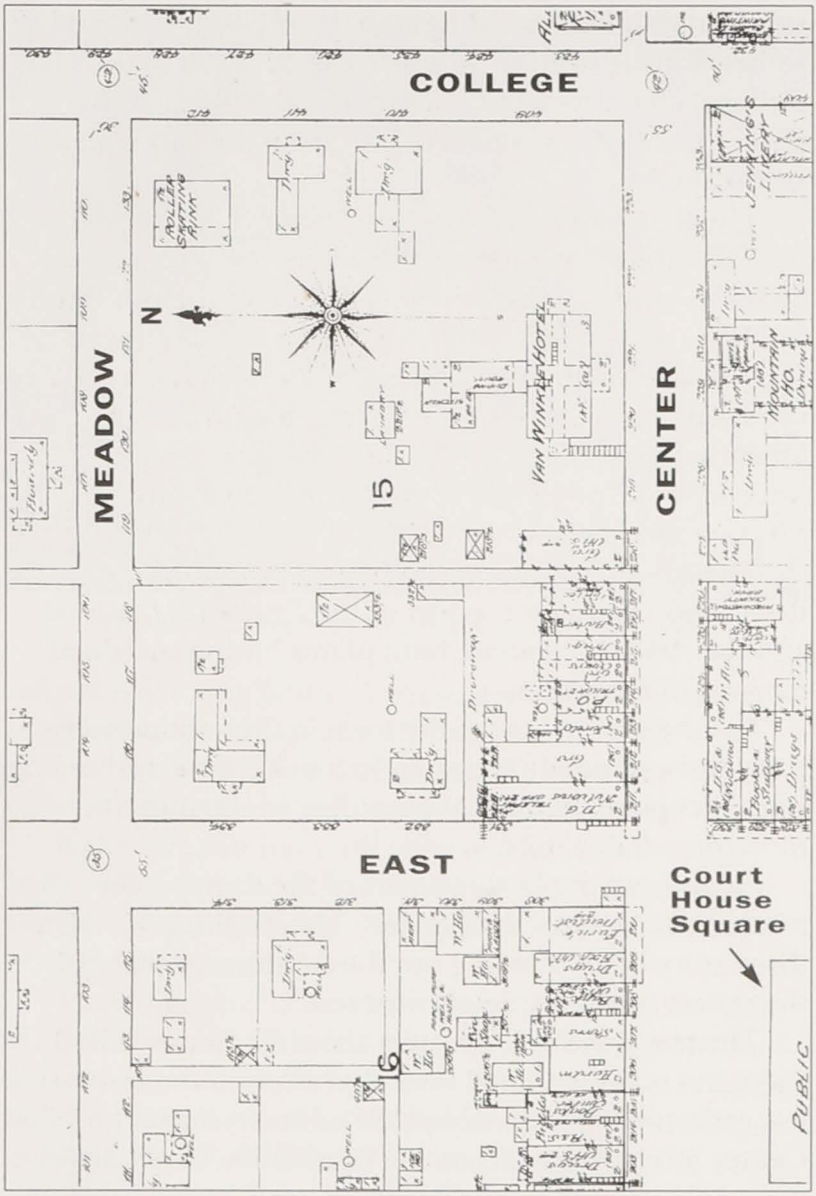
Whether the hotel was actually completed and being used is not clear at this time but on April 18, 1880, "at about half-past eight o'clock the most terrible and destructive tornado ever known in this county passed through the town of Fayetteville."

The special edition of the paper recounting the destruction was a joint effort of the *Fayetteville Democrat* and the *Arkansas Sentinel,* both plants having sustained damage in the storm.

"It (the storm) struck the town in the southwestern part, and extended through it in a northeasterly direction, sweeping almost every building in its course for more than half a mile.

"It entered the business part of the town on the southwest corner of the Square. The Tremont Hotel, a three story brick building on the southwest corner of the square, was completely wrecked."

The track of the storm was about 30 feet wide and there was one death and several persons were more or less seriously hurt. The Mountain House, located on Center Street, across from the Van Winkle Hotel, sustained about $1,000 damage, its tin roof was blown away and a portion of the south end of the upper stories was blown off. On the first of May the *Fayetteville Democrat* concluded a follow up report on the storm by saying "Our once beautiful city has almost been laid in ruins,



A portion of downtown Fayetteville as shown on a 1886 Sanborn insurance map

The Van Winkle Hotel appears on the 1886 Sanborn insurance map facing Center Street just across from the Mountain Hotel . (The two hotels are on either side of the word "Center" on the map.) The map is from *Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.*

but our people, with brave hearts and untiring energy, have gone to work to repair the damage and again build the town."

Flames were discovered at 3 a.m. on Saturday morning according to the May 26, 1880 issue of the Democrat. The flames were issuing from the midst of the block of frame buildings on the north side of Center Street, between Reed & Ferguson's brick and the Van Winkle house.

The Van Winkle once again was not damaged and it was among those that were saved by the exertions of the citizens.

All of this was forgotten after Capt. J. B. Steele took over the management and, probably because of the two disasters in the town, it was not until June 19 that the grand opening was held. This event was carefully chronicled in the *Fayetteville Democrat* and in such a manner that it surely decreased the editor's popularity in the minds of those guests he failed to mention.

"One of the pleasantest entertainments imaginable, being perfect in its minutest details, was the Ball given on the 10th inst. at Van Winkle's Hall where were gathered the elite of our city. Under the supervision of Messrs. Steele and Blackburn the Hall was brilliantly lighted and arranged with artistic skill. Occupying a handsome stage on the north side of the room the Fort Smith Orchestra discoursed sweet music, filling the spacious Hall with harmony.

"But the wonderful panorama on the floor enchanted our eye. For brilliancy of color and good effect, it could not be surpassed. The costumes were unusually handsome and it was our intention to give an extended description, but as time and space forbid we will only mention a few that were among the handsomest. Miss Sophia Taliaferro of Bentonville, wore a beautiful canary

tarltan with a satin bodice of the same delicate tint—garniture, scarlet flowers. Miss Kate Taliaferro was dressed in a handsome white cashmere with elaborate white satin trimmings. Miss Lula Rhoades in a pretty pink tarltan, bodice and trimmings of pink silk and ornaments of white flowers. Mrs. Alice Adams wore white tarltan with white satin basque—pink roses. Miss Maggie Reed wore white tarltan with garnet satin bodice. Miss Lina Reed, white, alpaca trimmed in cardinal satin jet ornaments. Miss Eugenie Harris wore a handsome light blue silk combined with a delicate shade of pink silk—pearl ornaments. Miss Agnes Harris a white tarltan beautifully trimmed with puffings of white satin—diamonds and pink flowers. Miss Nannie Cravens wore a white tarltan with delicate pink satin bodice—natural flowers and diamonds. Miss Minnie Boles white tarltan and lace—pink roses. Miss Belle King, cream colored cashmere and satin skirt—with blue silk bodice. Miss Emma Samstag, in walking dress of black bunting trimmed in old gold. Miss Jessie Cravens looked sweet in blue silk with satin puffings—ornaments of pearl. Miss Lou Jennings wore a handsome white tarltan elaborately trimmed in white satin. Miss Lena Bates wore an elegant dress of light blue silk and satin—white lace and diamonds. Miss Helen Sevors of Cincinnati, wore black silk and satin—jet ornaments. Mrs. Boling wore a beautiful organdy, Mrs. Arrington white cashmere and silk. Mrs. Phillip Bernays of Little Rock, black velvet and silk, jet trimmings. Mrs. Della Stirman's costume was of lavender and white lace. Mrs. Gunter wore an elegant black silk and velvet—diamonds.

Want of space precludes mention of the handsome costumes worn by other young ladies; among them were Misses Fanny Hester, Laura Botefuhr, Amanda Stone, Hattie Hobson, Lou Taliaferro, Carrie King, Belle

Prince, Mollie Sutton, Berma Scott, Willie Denan, Mrs. Dr. Hobson, Mrs. J. H. Van Hoose, Mrs. W. N. Crenshaw, Mrs. J. B. Steele, Mrs. J. A. Blackburn, and others.

"Among the gentlemen present we noticed the following: J. V. Walker, Jno A. Reed, W. H. Langford, W. H. Cravens, Frank F. Smith, T. D. Ross, J. C. Gunter, H. A. Dinsmore, W. D. Jacoway, Howard Gates, E. Andrews, J. R. Southworth, W. H. Summers, Gustave Jones, Jno F. Hicks, J. Fielder of Ozark, H. S. Spivey, Simon Baer of Fort Smith, J. D. Van Winkle, R. E. L. Van Winkle, Jno Lanier, B. H. Stone, Jno McClellan, R. Arrington, R. H. Smith and W. F. Stirman.

"The managers deserve high praise for their unceasing attention to the pleasure of all present and it must have caused them gratification to witness the complete success of their efforts. The night was far advanced when the gay company dispersed.

"This was an immense Ball in more ways than one and this meagre account gives but a poor idea of its beauty and brilliancy."

The hotel continued under the management of Steele until the death of Peter Van Winkle in 1882. R. Miller purchased it when Van Winkle's estate was settled.

In 1883 A Springfield, Mo. *Daily Herald* reporter wrote:

"There are two good hotels here, the Van Winkle House and the Mountain House, across from the Van Winkle. To keep peace and have things solid, R. A. Miller and Son just got both and have them under the same management. For the town it is a good hotel and the tables are always well seated. The Tremont gets a good patronage and is located on the southwest corner of the square."

This report demonstrates that H. L. Glass repaired the Tremont after the tornado.

In 1894 it was reported by W. J. Lemke writing, about a ledger from the Tremont Hotel in 1894-95 that many of the 12 theatrical and concert companies that came to Fayetteville stayed at the Tremont. It was near Woods Opera House which was upstairs over the building at the southeast corner of Mountain and Block Streets.

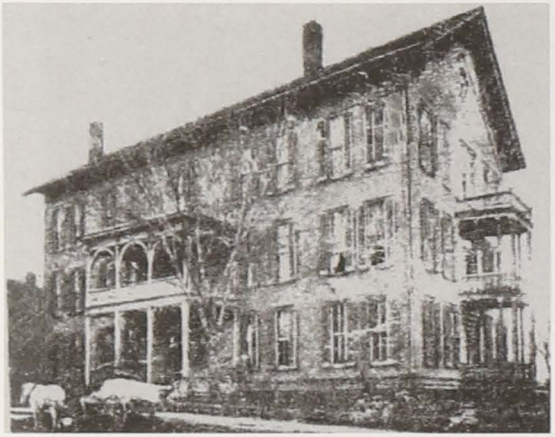
Henry Jackson, visiting his home town of Fayetteville in 1955, said the town's first opera house was a large hall on the third floor of the Van Winkle Hotel. He recalled seeing a performance of "Ten Nights in a Barroom" in that hall. He also recalled that the town's fire bell sounded an alarm while a show was in progress and Hugh Dinsmore leaped to his feet, told the audience to remain seated, ordered someone to guard the door and averted a possible panic. The opera house was reached by an outside stairway that went straight up.

Dr. E. F. Ellis also recalled the Van Winkle hotel. In fact, he hauled some of the lumber used to build it. He said the rooms on the first and second floors were used for guests and the third floor was used for a place of amusement and a dance hall.

W. L. Bush, writing in a book published in 1898 tells of a lecture tour by J. W. Walker and George Brown. He writes: "Their journey began at the Van Winkle hotel where they partook of a wholesome dinner. In the afternoon they were sitting on the veranda of the hotel with a party of gentlemen, including Gov. Fishback of Fort Smith, S. E. Marrs, editor of the *Fayetteville Democrat,* Hugh Reagan, editor of the *Sentinel,* Vol Walker, a prominent lawyer and Mr. Fleming of Springdale and others."

The hotel was described by W. S. Campbell as being one of the largest and most sumptuous frame structures in the state. The manager, Miller, was father of Dr. Otey Miller. Campbell described Miller as being a huge blustering type of man, generous alike to friend and foe.

The veteran Frisco agent here, W. P. McNair, had a standing bet that he could go to the Van Winkle, stay three weeks, walk out, and Miller would never ask for pay, or think any more about it, so little did he care about monetary matters. Campbell also notes that when the Woods Opera house began booking attractions the Van Winkle cut up their third story into hotel rooms.



Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Voulme 32, page 61. Used by permission.

The hotel third floor was not only used for out of town attractions but by local groups. In August 1885 a minstrel troupe was organized here and gave an exhibition in the hall over the Van Winkle House.

A Kansas journalist departed from the usual complimentary writing and complained about the grade of the sidewalks around the square in 1889. He also wrote, "what is called a road is a picturesque succession of mudholes, partially filled with round boulders the size of a 64 pound shot."

At this time the population of the city was not far from 4,000 and it was estimated that business transactions stood at $1.5 million.

A hotel register, dating from September 1898 to December 1899 demonstrated that the Van Winkle had its share of entertainers. The register is part of the holdings of Special Collections at the University of Arkansas.

Among the earliest registered were participants in

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

This show under, William F. Cody, had opened in New York in April and "outdid even its former successes."

The *New York Herald* concluded its account: "All over the world there are circuses and museums and side shows and red lemonade, but there is only one Buffalo Bill."

Earlier in September the show was in North Platte, Neb., and later in the month at Denver and Colorado Springs.

It was reported that the mammoth tent covered 11 acres of ground; the grand stand four and one-half acres. The working arena was 70,000 square feet in area. The tent wall canvas stretched for 22,750 yards; 1,104 stakes and 20 miles of rope held the massive tents together. The show's electric plant was valued at $15,000 and 60 men were employed in the cook tent alone.

The show swung south after its Denver appearance and later Cody was taken ill in Kansas City and went to his ranch to recuperate.

The following month Sharpley's Lyceum Theater Co. was registered and the advertisement in the paper announced: Sharpley's Lyceum Theater Co. and Aida Lawrence in a repertoire of the latest comedies and dramas have been engaged to open the season at the Opera House. This company has an established reputation and this year is larger and stronger than ever."

The same month the Salisbury Orchestra performed and returned in December for a second performance.

The "Missouri Girl", played by the Sadie Raymond Comedy Co. was billed as one of the best performances ever given in this city. Perfect order prevailed in the house, the play was as clean as it was bright. The editor took women with large hats to task and wrote: "There was nothing to mar the perfect enjoyment of the evening

but the irrepressible, abominable and unprincipled big hat, which broke out afresh last night, soared aloft, waved and bobbed with fiendish perversity that would have ruffled the temper of a saint stationed just in the rear. People who can enjoy themselves while depriving others of all enjoyment, are, to say the least of it, strangely and unfortunately constituted."

The year of 1899 opened with a performance of the Merrie Bell Opera Co. They presented the comic opera "La Mascotte." "In this presentation the company scored the hit of the season, for, in addition, to the excellent solos and choruses, the comedians have scored a hit most marked and particularly deserving. It is safe to say that Messrs Henderson and Lightwood have not been equaled as a pair of fun makers. Jack Henderson as Prince Lorengo was simply irrestiable and Harry Lightwood as Rocco had his audience with him from start to finish. But when the two came together then the mischief was to pay.

"Miss Ada Palmer Walker continues to be a favorite and her pleasing voice wins admirers at every performance. Particularly pleasing is her handling of the title role. She puts life in the Mascot. She gives her vigor and in short makes the part an ideal one. In this opera Miss Kendall takes the part of Prince Frederic and a dashing young prince she makes. Added to her charming grace she has a sweet voice and captivates her audience."

Other entertaining troupes who registered included Hoyt's Comedy Co. of New York, Trowbridge Orchestra , Guy's Novelty Co., Casey's Troubles Co. and Clara Mathes Co.

The Mathes company was advertised as one of the largest and most successful repertoire companies in America. They presented during their stay the latest

New York success, with special scenery, elegant costumes, numerous accessories, etc. A change of play and specialities were scheduled each night.

The price of admission to the Opera House then ranged from 10 cents to 30 cents.

Registered on Oct. 12, 1899 was simply "football team" A notice in the paper solved the mystery with a report that the University football team lost the first game of the season to Drury College of Springfield, Mo. by a score of 10-0.

In 1905 the hotel was sold to Phipps-Williams lumber Company for $15,000. It was never used as a hotel again. The dining room and kitchen at the rear were dismantled and the remainder of the building was brick veneered.

Several business offices were located in the building and at one time it was the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity hall.

The front page of the January 15, 1914 paper relates the demise of this building that had played a role in Fayetteville's history for three decades.

The fire that occurred on Jan. 10, was described as the worst conflagrations that ever visited the city. The fire wiped out a section of business district causing an approximate loss of $50,000.

Business firms which were affected included the Phipps-Williams Lumber Co., which owned the Van Winkle Building and the adjoining building occupied by the Fayetteville Printing Company, the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company, P. J. Carney and company, and Pulley Millinery Co.

The blaze started in the old Van Winkle building which was a few years ago remodeled and made into an office building. The origin is not known, nor has the exact location of the first blaze been identified. How-

ever, it is thought that it started on the third floor of what was formerly the SAE Fraternity Hall.

Most of the fire was confined to the Van Winkle but the buildings and stocks of goods on both sides of the building were also badly damaged.

Area residents of Northwest Arkansas were registered at the Van Winkle Hotel as the nineteenth century came to a close. Many times they were served lunch or dinner and other times they were overnight guests.

BENTONVILLE
Brock, R. R.
Burkett, H. H.
Carey, J. D.
Haney, James, contractor
Harley, Tho. M.
Hart, Kate
Hart, Cora,
Hatcher, W. E.
Jackson, J. T.
Laughlin, R. J., watchmaker
Lindsey, T. G.
Macon, E. J.
McAndrews J. G., farmer
McDaniel, E. S. and wife
McGill, S. N.
Morris, J. B.
Peel, Col. S. W.
Peel, D. W.
Rice, Dick
Rice, T. A.
Schrader, E. L.
Sherman, J. S.
Stevenson, Joe E.
Sullivan, J. H.

BlACKBURN
Mannon, J. H.

BOONSBORO
Carter, W. J.
Edmiston, J. S.
Irwin, James
Kirby, J. H.
Miller, J. B.
Prince, J. E.
Stevens, G. E.

CANEHILL
Blackburn, Dr. —

CHESTER
Williamson, J. R.

CINCINNATI
Cass, H. E.
Craig, P. V., merchant
Goodman, A. R.
Jones, W. L.
Pence, S. W.
Smith, David
Stiger, J. C.
Tunnell, R. W.
Walker, A.
Watts, J. C.

CLYDE
King, L. H.

COMBS
Castain, K.

ELKINS
Williams, Dr.—
Benbrook, H. M.

FAYETTEVILLE
Adams, Chas D.
Alexander, Mary
Alexander, Carrie
Ambrose, D. C., editor
Baker, W. I.
Bary, J. M.
Bynum, Ernest T.
Carter, G. W.
Conners, W. C.
Cook, G. W.
Cooper, E. T.
Cravens, S. F.
Crenshaw, John Thomas
Dinsmore, Hugh A.
Drain, J. E.
Dryfus, A. E.
Frier, F.
Gibson, W. C.
Graham, R. N.
Granger, Clarence
Hamblen, W. H.
Harrison, T. E.
Healy, Chas J. & wife
Hendrick, Gus
Hite, Newt
Hunt, Mrs.—
Jackson, J. C.
Lamberton, F. M.
Lambertson, G. M.
Lewis, John
Martin, G.
Massengale, Lew
Massie, W. E.

McCasby, Jim
Miller, R. H.
Mitchell, Dick
Norman, A. H.
Phillbeck, John
Smith, Ed
Steele, W. H.
Stuckey, W. L.
Taylor, J. T.
Turner, B. E.
Van Hoose, J. H., mayor 1889
Vandeventer, Jas C.
Walker, Wythe & wife,attorney
Walker, Dave
Walker, J. D. Senator
Walker, John

FORT SMITH
Abbott, W. R.
Alford, W. H.
Archer, Jno.
Atkinson, Mrs.—
Aydlett, T. P.
Barron, G. W.
Botefuhr, E. H.
Carnahan, J. H.
Cole, Frank
Devlin, John
Everton, Jno A.
Freisuber, Burk
Friedburger, Mrs.—
Friedman, Y.
Fruylburger, Wm
Fry, R. M., Jr.
Goodman, G. C.
Grace, Geo. A.
Gray, T. C.
Hindman, Wm.
Holloway, J. S.
Hurley, M. L.
Hutchison, S. W.
Knight, F. D.
Lee, A. E.
Manning, T. P.
McKinney, T. P.
Middleton, H. and wife
Montgomery, J. A.
Murray, J. P.
Murry, L. B.
Nunnery, T. P.
Osborne, T. S.
Parks, S.R.
Read, T. J.
Thurman, R. S.
Tilles, Geo.
Turner, Troy
Vanbrickle, J. H.
Van Winkle, J. D., AIU Bookstore
Vogel, Frank
Walker, Alexander
Walker, Maud
Wallace, Dr. Jno M.
Wallin, A.
Walton, A.
Whinnery, T. P.

GOSHEN
Mays, R. J., farmer
Slaughter, S. H.
Swift, C. E.

GRAVETTE
Black, S.

HINDSVILLE
Vaughan, A.

HUNTSVILLE
Nunneley, Mr. and Mrs. Sam
Polk, E. E.
Skaggs, W. C.
Smith, A. T.

JOHNSON
Johnson, Hugh
Stuckey, N. L.

LINCOLN
Marrell, Z. Z.

LOWELL
Walker, T. L.

MAGUIRE'S STORE
Benbrook, Hosea

MAYFIELD
Remey, W. C.

OSAGE MILLS
Beach, B. S.,merchant

PETTIGREW
Charlesworth, Wm.
Elliott, Lee
Jeter, Ed E.
McGalliard, J. F., farmer
Young, Frank
Yount, Robert

PRAIRIE GROVE
Baggett, J. J.
Collier, J. H.
Collier, Z. O.
Hall, J. P. & wife
McCormick, D. N.
McCormick, Doss
Pyeatt, L. B.

PURDY
Birkes, J.
Morrow, W. I. I.
Morton, W. H.

ROGERS
Blackburn, J. A. C., lumberman
Boxey, M. O.
Brixey, M. O.
Cowling, Don C.
Creekmore, F.
Daggett, W. A.
Dunberry, E. L.
Gilbert, Will
Harrison, Bertha
Horsley, Buck
Johnson, Chas
Kelly, M.
Lane, Ward
McGaughey, H. M., farmer

Morgan, E. R.
Nance, R. L.
Phelps, S.
Quinthard, Chas
Robinson, E. J.
Rogers, A. B. C.
Simmons, E.
Weidemeyer, G. N.
Westaway, W. C.
Wing, S. B.. fruitman
Woods, J. P.

ST. PAUL
Blair, Miss —
Blair, Marvie
Brashears, N.
Brewer, B.
Cummings, E. R.
Darling, Miss —
Dye, Clint
Elliot, Bertha
Elliot, Cordia
Elliott, D. B.
Harp, Sarah
Hutchens, C. W.
McCoy, W. G.
Paxton, Pete
Rybeer, John
Wisco, Sam
Yates, M.
Yount, Miss —

SPRINGDALE
Allen, Sadie
Bandini, Father
Berry, Millard, mayor
Chandler, J. M., druggist
Couch, Claud
Dailey, H. A.
Davis, J. P.
Duckworth, Bessie
Farrar, W. T.
Harris, J. R., canning firm
Holcourt, F. P.
Horton, Carl
Long, J. L.
Martin, Cy
Masser, E. L.
Miller, M.
Ogden, W. A.
Rarmur, R. E.
Renner, R. E.
Renner, Kate
Smith Hugh D.
Stokes, W. L.,livery firm
Strother, W. L.
Suttle, C.
Todhunter, S. L.
Todhunter, R. T.
Todhunter, J. L.
Walker, Geo A.
Walker, Sam
Walker, S. S.
Welton, Jas.
White, F. D.
White, F. P.
White, G. L.
Yarman, Grace

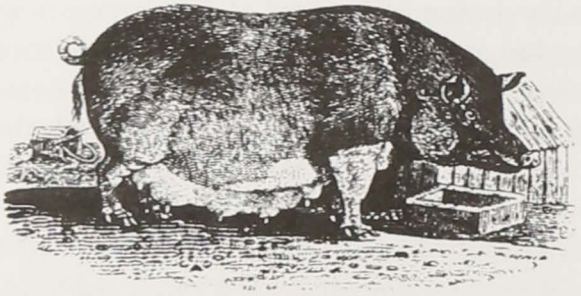
SPRING VALLEY
Sanders, H. H.
Saunders, H.

VAN BUREN
Brown, Jno.
Callahan, G. N.
Caney, B. C.
Clancy, B.
Curry, B. C.
Fontain, C. B.
Leary, B. C.
Moore, D. W. , merchant
Pierce, E. B.
Scott, P. D., Jr., coal company
Shibley, Carl, coal company

WESLEY
Gibson, H. D.
Gibson, L. H.

WEST FORK
Gillstrap, Jesse

WINSLOW
Harris, Joe
Reed, T. B.



The Sow of the Improved Breed

THE ATTEMPTED **ROBBERY AND HANGING** AT THE EMERSONS' FARM

By Robert L. Keen

The Emersons were one of the pioneer families on what is now known as Antioch Mountain. Antioch Mountain is south of the town of Morrow, Ark. Two brothers, Joseph and Walter Emerson, moved from New York to Antioch Mountain, to make a better life for their families. Joseph and Walter were considered by most people then to be very prosperous, mostly because of the amount of land that they had.

In the spring of 1871, three men rode into Evansville, Ark., from the Indian Nation. They hung around Evansville for two or three days where they began to hear stories about the Emersons. Rumor was that the Emersons had money hidden on their farm which was very remotely located. The men must have decided to relieve the Emersons of their wealth, because they soon showed up at the farm demanding the Emersons' money. The Emersons assured them there wasn't any hidden treasure. Upon hearing this, the would-be robbers proceeded to tear up the house. At this time Mrs. Emerson sent the oldest son for help. He slipped out the back door, and ran to the home of Ira McCaleb, where no one was home. The lad saddled one of McCaleb's horses and rode to Robert McCamish's house at Cove Creek. McCamish was a deputy sheriff. Luck was with the youngster when he arrive at McCamish's home, Sheriff Ben Little and Justice of the Peace, Mr. Larramore were all there. They left the boy and headed for the Emerson Place.

Meanwhile at the farm, because they could find no

money, the robbers began to terrorize the family. They burned the barn, and shot several hogs. When all of this failed to convince the Emersons to tell where their money was, they took Walter and hung him in the front yard, so killing him. The outlaws then took Joe, put a rope around his chest, hung him from a tree, second built a fire under his feet to make him talk. He refused to tell them anything. However, his wife, because she feared losing her husband the same way she lost her brother-in-law finally told the renegades where the money was buried. Joe was cut down and told to dig up the money.

By then the sheriff and his men were within two miles of the farm. They met Tom Holcroft, and his sons, Sam and Stuart, who were kin to the Emersons. When told of the treachery being done to their relatives, Tom unhitched his horses from the wagon, mounted the men, and hurried along to help. When they arrived at the Emerson place, Tom put his two sons behind a rock wall; told them to lay there until he returned. The sheriff and his squad took the outlaws by surprise behind the corn crib. After trading gunfire, the culprits decided to make a run for it. They made a mad dash for their horses tied near the house. However an Emerson child had undone a cinch so when one of criminals jumped on his horse, he tumbled to the ground. The other two left him to his fate.. He got up and fled on foot. Joe seeing the situation, ran into the house, got his gun, proceeded to chase the run away. Joe not knowing the Holcroft boys were behind the rock wall where their father had left them, started firing at his target. Joe shot him in the head. He dropped over the wall dead, right between the two boys.

Sheriff Ben Little and his men, set out to catch the other two skunks. They were followed to the old Harmony Church where gunfire was exchanged. In a

few minutes men from the community of Garrett Creek joined up.

The location of the battle was a mile northwest of Garrett Creek. After several hours of fighting it was over. The two crooks were dead. A Mr. Rose was shot in his leg. The sheriff checked over the two corpses, but could find nothing to identify them. They were buried about on hundred yards north of the Harmony Church. Upon returning to the Emerson farm, the other troublemaker was carried to the local cemetery, now known as Antioch Cemetery, and buried in an unmarked grave. Walter Emerson was also buried there with only a field stone to mark his grave. When the sheriff asked Joe about the money, he was told that there was two hundred dollars buried under the steps. So four lives were lost, one man injured, a barn burnt, eight head of hogs killed, a family terrorized, and many lives endangered for a mere two hundred dollars.

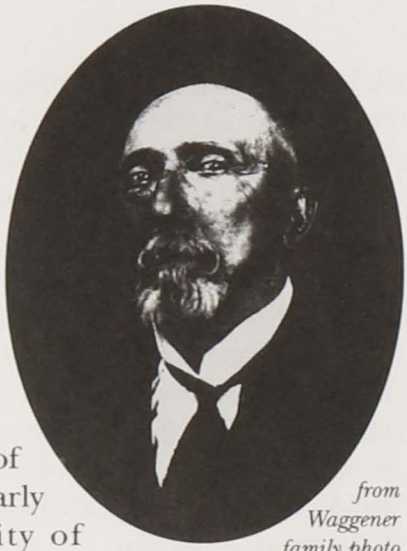
The Emersons continued to live on the farm until 1912. They sold their place to Anderson Freeman and moved to Rule, Tex., where they continued to farm. The last report of the Emersons was in 1928 of Charlie, Lane, John D., and his wife, Annie Briggs Emerson, who all still lived in Rule, Tex. They were the sons of Joe Emerson. The old Emerson house still stands today.

Benjamin F. Little, served as sheriff of Washington County from 1868 to 1872.

When the mouth stumbles, it is worse than the foot.

West African Proverb

Recollections of the First Graduate of the University of Arkansas



from Waggener family photo

by Don E. Schaefer

While searching for sources of information regarding the early buildings at the University of Arkansas, my attention was directed to a letter written by William J. Waggener, the first graduate of the University, to the daughter of the first president of the University, Noah P. Gates. This letter, the original manuscript of which is preserved in the Special Collections of the University Libraries, has been quoted in part in the *Arkansas Alumnus* and other publications. However, the letter, in its entirety, is a very remarkable commentary on the early years of the University of Arkansas, the kind of education that was offered, the kind of person who served as its first president, and the writer's philosophy of higher education. Both the letter and Waggener's contributions to society are testimonies of the positive impact that even a fledgling state university had on the lives of its graduates.

Knowing something of the life and accomplishments of the man who wrote this letter will put his words into proper perspective.

William J. Waggener

William John Waggener was born in Lewis County, Missouri, on August 17, 1855. He entered what was then

Arkansas Industrial University in March of 1872 at the age of 16. At the time of his enrollment at the University his home address was listed as Farmington, Arkansas.

He finished the Normal School in 1875 with the first group to graduate, but no degrees were conferred. In 1876, William J. Waggener was the first of nine AIU students to be awarded a baccalaureate degree, but according to Waggener, "there was no ranking of graduates." He was, however, assigned the functions of class poet and class prophet. He returned to the University in 1885 to receive a master's degree. Later, he did further graduate study at Iowa State College, Clark University, and the University of Berlin.

Waggener taught all grades in public schools and was principal of the Del Norte, Colorado, Public Schools from 1880 to 1882.

The teaching career for which he is best known is his 13-year association with the University of Colorado. He became the first professor of physics at Colorado when that university was just struggling to get a start, and there were few students, two or three buildings, and very little room, apparatus, or money. He relied a great deal on his own ingenuity and industry to design and create what was needed to teach physics properly. Some of his designs contained features not found in similar apparatus of the time. These included a tangent galvanometer, a self-evacuating barometer, a telescope, and an early form of a "lantern slide" used in classroom instruction.

In 1892 Waggener was requested to provide information on "contrivances" he had developed to be used in a display in Chicago at the World's Columbia Exposition and later in Washington, D.C.

His meticulous method of recording supplies and equipment in his department, later transferred from a ledger to a card file, became the model for the first

property accounting system at the University of Colorado.

Waggener's very early interest in scientific apparatus (as evidenced in the letter) not only continued through his teaching career, but served as his vocation after he left Colorado in 1898. He subsequently moved to California and devoted his studies to the invention, design, and construction of scientific instruments and mechanical devices for special purposes.

Professor Waggener died January 16, 1942 in Los Angeles.

Here is the letter he wrote in 1909:

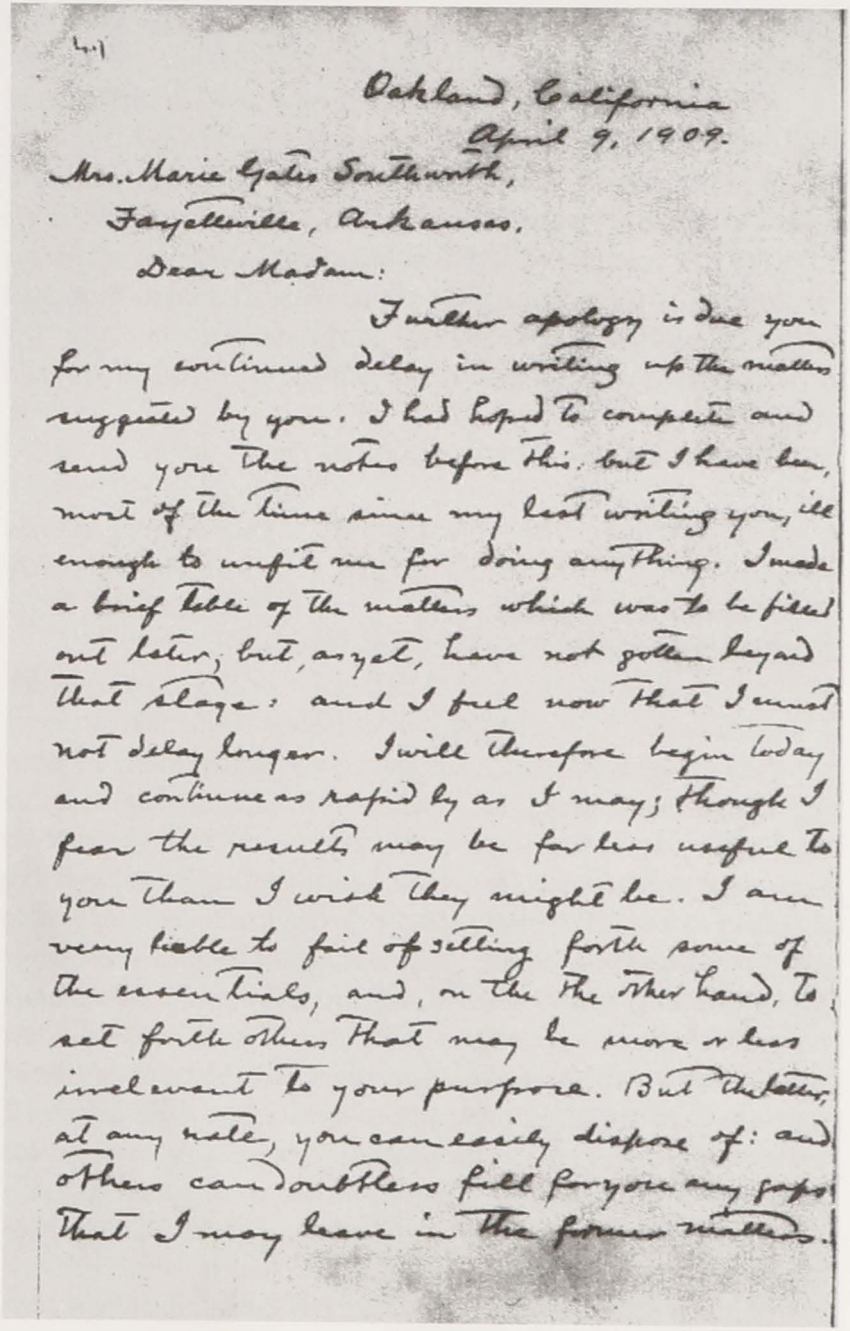
Oakland, California
April 9, 1909

Mrs. Marie Gates Southworth
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Dear Madam:

Further apology is due you for my continued delay in writing up the matters suggested by you. I had hoped to complete and send you the notes before this but I have been most of the time since my last writing you, ill enough to unfit me for doing anything. I made a brief table of the matters which was to be filled out later, but, as yet, have not gotten beyond that stage: and I feel now that I must not delay longer. I will therefore begin today and continue as rapidly as I may; though I fear the results may be far less useful to you than I wish they might be. I am very liable to fail of setting forth some of the essentials, and, on the other hand, to set forth others that may be more or less irrelevant to your purpose. But the latter, at any rate, you can easily dispose of: and others can doubtless fill for you any gaps that I may leave in the former matters.

Having no records of any kind, I must rely wholly on my memory as to all the particulars which I have set forth. My



Oakland, California
April 9, 1909.

Mrs. Marie Gates Southworth,
Fayetteville, Arkansas.

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Special Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville

memory is fairly accurate, I think: yet some of the pictures have grown rather dim.

It was sometime very near to the first day of March 1872, when I became a student in the University. I had heard of the competition entered into by the various towns in the State for the location of the University; and that Fayetteville had won in the contest, by making donations of land and perhaps of money, for the use of the institution: but the actual beginning of work was already some time in the past before my attention was fixed and my purpose formed, to be a participant in the benefits. When I first came on the scene the work had therefore been in progress for five weeks or more.

During this time, the number of students had very materially increased, Though I cannot state how many there were, I recall that they quite comfortably filled the whole of one floor of the temporary two-story building, when they all came together; as they did at certain times every day. At a very rough guess, I should say there were fifty to one hundred of them.

By this time President Gates had called in two others, Miss Mary R. Gorton and Professor Charles H. Leverett, to assist in the work of instruction. These three carried the work to the end of the first (fractional) year; that is, to some day in the first half of June 1872.

Buildings

During this time the only building used for purposes of instruction was the two-story frame above mentioned. (the dwelling and other farm buildings standing somewhat to the eastward, and afterward removed, were, during this time otherwise occupied.

Library

My memory is a little hazy as to the number of books on hand during this opening year. I think there was a small number in a case at one end of the upper room. I know that a num-

ber of very carefully selected ones were there in the second year, as I then begin to make active use of them. A large proportion of these were especially selected for the use of the normal class then organized. During the second if not the first year, there were also a few of the most useful periodicals: but it may be summarily stated that the library equipment was very small during the early years. There was, however, in this, as in other parts of the equipment, some growth during every year, as the work went on. (But the collection was still a very small one at the time when the first degrees were conferred on graduates – in June 1876.)

Apparatus

As to "apparatus" during the first year; I can, with certainty, recall nothing more coming under this head than some blackboards and a set of geographical wall maps in outline, bearing the name, I think, of the geographer Guyot. These were used for reviews during the first year and subsequently for normal school purposes.

(I recall here that, before coming to the University, I had for some time a "tellurian" made with toothed wheels and two wooden balls; these latter having been formed for me by a neighbor on his wood-turning lathe. I myself constructed the toothed wheels and mounted the rather clumsy machine on posts set in the ground. When I came to the University I detached the larger of the wooden globes and brought it with me, thinking it would be useful to me in some of my studies. Later, perceiving the need for something of this kind in some of the classes, I brought this wooden ball, of about six inches diameter, to Miss Gorton: and in her skillful hands it for some time served purposes useful to others as well as to myself. Later, a tellurian of the usual form was purchased: but I can not recall just when this occurred. Possibly it was during the first year, but more probably at a later time.)

The first apparatus for laboratory and general chemical study was provided in the third year (1873-4) when Professor T.

L. Thompson came to organize and instruct the first class in chemistry. This was, for those times, a very fair equipment for the study of general chemistry (covering the ground as set forth in Eliot and Storer's Manual of Inorganic Chemistry, which was the class-book). Professor Thompson also conducted the work in Physics during the one and one-half years of his activity in the University, but there was at that time no physical apparatus, properly so called. The freshman class of the second year (1872-3) studied physics, but, of course, likewise without apparatus. In fact there was no regular apparatus for physics until the fifth year (1875-6) when Professor F. L. Harvey came to the professorship of chemistry made vacant by Professor Thompson's death during the previous year. Professor Harvey had also the work in physics and at once added, to the already existing (but small) collection for chemistry, a considerable number of physical instruments, among which I recall, the air-pump and its accessories, a Holtz electrostatic machine, a galvanic battery etc. constituting a little nucleus from which great things might grow. The above exhausts, I believe, the history of the University's apparatus for the first five years.

Buildings (again)

While writing, further back, of the first building – the lonely two-story frame, standing hidden among the black-oak trees, I might have exhausted also the topic of the buildings for the first five years. I will now mention the buildings added during this period. The next building, likewise a two-story frame but larger in all its dimensions than the first, was erected during the summer vacation between the first and second years. It stood to the westward of the first building and was united with that by hallways, roofed over and enclosed. During the next-following summer vacation an addition of corresponding size was made to and in the rear of this second building. This third part had the chemical classrooms and laboratory on the lower floor, and general classrooms on the upper floor. The upper floor of the second

building was the assembly-room until the main building was erected, and was also used for recitations. The remaining space in both buildings was divided into class-rooms.

At the end of the fourth year of work (near about the middle of June, 1875) the main building was so nearly completed that the closing exercises for that year were held in the chapel of that building. (At that time the first class was graduated from the normal department; but no degrees were confirmed, The first degrees were confirmed a year later, upon the first class of graduates from the college proper.)

In general regard to that part of the equipment constituted by the buildings, it may be said that while they fell far short of what they might and would have been, had the resources of the institution been abundantly large; still they were much more nearly sufficient than – and in a description of early difficulties and hardships of the undertaking they figure much less largely than–

1. *the lack of apparatus (already discussed),*
2. *the lack of library (already discussed).*
3. *the smallness of the teaching force and the consequently heavy individual burdens, and*
4. *the crudity and unpreparedness of the human material (the students) to which the operational processes of education were to be applied.*

Teaching Force (again)

Regarding the additions of the teaching force after the first year, I can not undertake to describe them in detail, as my memory of them is not complete and perhaps also this is not necessary to your purposes. It will probably suffice to say that there were some additions and changes each year. Yet the teaching force grew but slowly in relation to the needs of the school. (I think there were but nine regular professors at the end of the fifth year – June, 1876 – including the president.) It must be said however that its members, with very few exceptions indeed

were men and women who, like the three that conducted the work of the opening year, put their hearts and souls into their work and labored for the welfare of their young charges with a devotion and earnestness so far surpassing that of the place-holder that their deep and friendly interest made itself seen and felt by all: and this earnestness and untiring activity went far – very far indeed – to compensate for the smallness of the number of workers. This is a disadvantage under which nearly all the young institutions and likewise many of the older ones must labor. These pioneers made, in the face of all the difficulties, a good beginning – a wonderfully creditable one, where all the circumstances are considered – and laid an excellent and worthy foundation for future growth. They amply earned and I trust that they will have the perpetual gratitude of the whole commonwealth. I know that they have the lasting gratitude and love of their pupils.

The Students

Coming now to the central feature of the work and of its burdens, that is to the mass of young humanity to be formed and trained for useful citizenship, I recall with vividness and some particularity the earliest and the somewhat later conditions.

I have already said something about the number of students in the first year's work. Commenting now upon the attainments of those who followed closely after them, it should first be recalled that the State and region had then by no means recovered from the destructive effects of the great civil war; that even before this disastrous check to its growth, it was still but a new community – almost a frontier state. At the time when the University was born it was still unpenetrated by railways and but few of its towns or citizens came in touch with the world at large through daily mails and daily newspapers. All public undertakings had necessarily but feeble financial support: and, among these, the public school system was in only the germinal stage. The some-

what unsteady and uncertain work of the public schools was to some extent supplemented by private ones of a more or less transient character, those in rural districts being conducted by individual teachers, sometimes resident there, sometimes itinerant as in ante-bellum days; and in the towns and villages, sometimes by one sometimes by several instructors acting for themselves or under the auspices of some church organization, some of the teachers having very fair ability and scholarship, and others having less.

Under these circumstances a body of students adequately prepared to enter a college course was not possible; nor could this preparation, either at the outset or for many years thereafter, be made in the state, except at the University itself: and herein lay perhaps the heaviest task of the pioneer teachers at the University.

Most of the first comers had covered the ground of the "common branches" but, in many cases rather defectively. A number had the rudiments of Latin and some mathematics and various other studies beyond the range of the common school; but there were serious gaps in the training of all. Consequently the fractional opening year was almost wholly devoted to filling up these gaps – getting ready for organized work – or, borrowing a homely figure from the animal world, to "licking the cubs into shape." For the great majority of the students there were, along with studies of preparatory or high-school grade, also reviews of arithmetic, geography, English grammar and reading: and sometimes the whole body of pupils together were put through general exercises of a practical character, sometimes mathematical, sometimes elocutionary, sometimes in grammatical precision of speech and so forth. On some occasions this general meeting was organized into the form of a debating society and made an extemporaneous discussion of some question proposed by the instructor, who at the time guided and aided, by criticism and otherwise, the participants; and thus introduced these to a knowledge of parliamentary rules and of the ethics and etiquette

of debate. Out of these last mentioned lessons grew the first literary and debating society in the University. It was formed during the first year and started chiefly under the guidance of Miss Gorton, but with much helpful advice and kindly criticism from President Gates also.

During this year as well as during all the subsequent years of my stay there, we had almost daily from President Gates short addresses – helpful criticism kindly and paternally given or useful advice and instruction closely and practically related to our well-being and actual health, physical as well as mental and moral. I do not hesitate to say, as I have said many times before and to many different persons, that nothing in all our life in college or elsewhere could, for our actual good, outweigh these wholesome lessons that came to us in those thoughtful though informal lectures from this true friend.

Turning again to the opening year's work, it is good to remember that, in response to the earnest efforts of the teachers – felt rather than understood by the pupils – there was, on the part of the latter, an almost unanimous responsive earnestness and industry: and, in spite of all disadvantages and deficiencies, actual and rapid progress was made.

Also it was fortunate that, among these first comers, a number was included of those who by nature were inclined toward learning, and, either under direction of teachers or through their own efforts had already so sufficiently advanced themselves that they could in a short time be fairly made fit for college work. These were naturally among the early seekers of the new fountain of knowledge: and they together with their early followers found the first college class (organized at the beginning of the first year) and the actual nucleus of the University's future growth.

In the second year also a normal school class was regularly organized, courses of study were adopted and published; and the work of the institution had now taken on a more visible form and definite substance. Yet then and for long thereafter the little

band of pioneer teachers, had necessarily to labor (and they did so faithfully and patiently) during a large portion of their long hours of daily duty, to amend the deficiencies of the raw young recruits, whether the more world-wise boy from the larger towns or the green, awkward youngster from the forest or mountainside. (Of the latter, I can speak with especial understanding and sympathy; for of all those that ever knew of verdant and awkward was one whom modesty forbids one to say much about.)

Taking their number into account it may be said that the college and normal work alone, at any rate after the first two or three years, would have kept the teachers sufficiently busy. The preparatory work was therefore a heavy additional burden. (I do not know the present conditions in this regard: but I trust that the high schools and academies of the State have so multiplied by this time that the preparatory department may be soon wholly or partly abolished, if this has not already been done.)

Having now said something of the earliest work and its difficulties (though, I fear, not in a very illuminating way) I have perhaps set forth that which you had most in mind for me to describe: and while I very vividly recall much about the four years following the opening one, and especially regarding the student life as it was then and there; this would be mostly aside from your present purpose: and I therefore need not delay this writing to include such matters.

Student Life in the Early Days

I will however add that no matter how crude and simple it may have been relatively to the smarter and more pretentious life of these later years, whether there or elsewhere; it had much to recommend it to the approval of the right-minded. I have seen quite a bit of the very modern and very pretentious university life: and I can point out some very distinct advantages of that relatively ancient time. In the first place there was an unconscious or matter-of-course assumption, on the part of the student, that he came there to study – to work – not to loaf or to

play foot-ball (Thank heaven, there was no foot-ball or base-ball or any "intercollegiate" games of any sort!): and there was therefore a rather general and vigorous industry and application to honest work: and consequently the thoughts and aspirations of the student ran more to things common-sensible than to things idiotic. (Of course, I admit that a good gymnasium is a very necessary part of a college equipment.)

Again (and heaven be thanked for this also!), there were, as yet, none of the supra-idiotic Greek-letter fraternities, to breed snobs, debauchees, and loafers. There was the democratic simplicity and fellowship and social equality that are fundamental in every free country. I suppose the Greek-letter fraternity must have invaded the University long ere this. If it has, I trust that the State Legislature will outlaw and banish it. No aristocratic pretensions, no shirking of the serious work before him, no senseless or lawless revelry on the part of the student should be even in the least measure tolerated in an institution of, by and for the people. In these matters the University can never do better than to keep them as they were in the days of its infancy.

Some Remarks on the Personal Work and Influence of President Gates

Before closing, I must make a few additional remarks on the work and influence of President Gates, as they were known to me. During my five years at the University, it was under his control with the exception of only one year, and steadily growing under his careful management. While I did not know the details of his burdens and responsibilities, I knew enough to be aware that they were both numerous and heavy: and I also was conscious, as was every one who observed, whether from within or without the University life, that his work was done with conscientious thoroughness and with strict justice which were to this man as natural and as much matters-of-course as were his breathing or the beating of his heart.

During all this time, in addition to the duties of adminis-

tration he also did a large share of the work of instruction. Those who were his pupils will remember that in this as in all else he was patiently thorough, painstaking and efficient, clear in exposition and augmentation, going to the heart of the matter and insisting on the essentials in a way that made every hour's work leave clear, strong impressions on thought and memory. He knew, however, to administer stern rebuke when he thought it necessary; as I have personal reason to remember, having on some occasions called it down upon my own head: but his motives were so clear and his justice so evident that no one – certainly myself – ever felt the least diminution of respect and affection for him. Most of the censure which he visited upon me arose from the rather intolerant and somewhat militant skepticism and materialism which I had developed in those days. Sometimes, when I ventured bitterly to attack prevalent beliefs, I was suitably rebuked for my arrogance: and sometimes I was sufficiently silenced by his answers. For example, on one occasion I argued against the existence of soul and spirit independently or separately from the human body. I suggested that the brain with its mental impressions, sensations, was analogous to the dark box of the photographic camera and its pictures, etc. His answer was brief and telling. He said "But it would be a pretty smart sort of box, wouldn't it, if it knew that the pictures were there?" I did not then or later find any very confident rejoinder to that answer. It became pretty plain to one that the great fundamental fact of consciousness was not to be explained in terms of purely "physical" facts.

I have already dwelt somewhat upon the great practical value of the advice given in his brief daily lectures to the student body and of the parental interest which he manifested in these: but I wish to add here, that I had knowledge of his repeating the substance of these to individual students who had not heard them with the main body of students, but who were late comers, straggling into the University after the year and its lessons had partly passed by. I mention this to show how far his interest in

the individual welfare of his charges carried him to labor – how far beyond all exertion that anyone could or would have expected him to make. However, this interest showed itself in numberless other ways and in many cases: and it never failed, however numerous its objects might be. They were all to him very much as sons and daughters. I have been with him at various times when at the bedside of the sick or of the dying, he gave all cheer, aid and comfort that anyone could give. But I will not now enter into details of this kind. You of course know even better than I of these traits of his character. I will bring this statement to a close: but if I have omitted anything which you wish me to write of it will perhaps be well to put it in the form of particular questions or particular topics: and I can answer somewhat more definitely.

I am concluding this on April 17 – eight days after beginning it as you will note. I found it impossible to work continuously, but have written something on nearly every day intervening. I am quite aware that I have written very diffusely; but trust you will find herein at least a part of the descriptive matter that you sought. Some apology is due also for the irregular and sprawling penwork, which is due to nervousness, and which may not be easy to decipher. However, it seems better to send this first draft as it is, rather than to make further delay by rewriting it.

I will close with a response to your remark that you do not seek to make your sketch a eulogy upon your father. My comment is not to be exactly in favor or against your attitude. I would say that an account of his labors which does not eulogize, could not be a correct one: but, on the other hand, the best eulogy on his character and life must be a true account of his work. His was a heavy burden which the pioneer must always bear: and he bore it well and bravely. His history is that of arduous duties nobly done – of heavy and largely thankless tasks faithfully and unselfishly performed.

Very respectfully yours,
W. J. Waggener

FOOTNOTES TO HISTORY

A Letter From Silas Mercer Holcomb

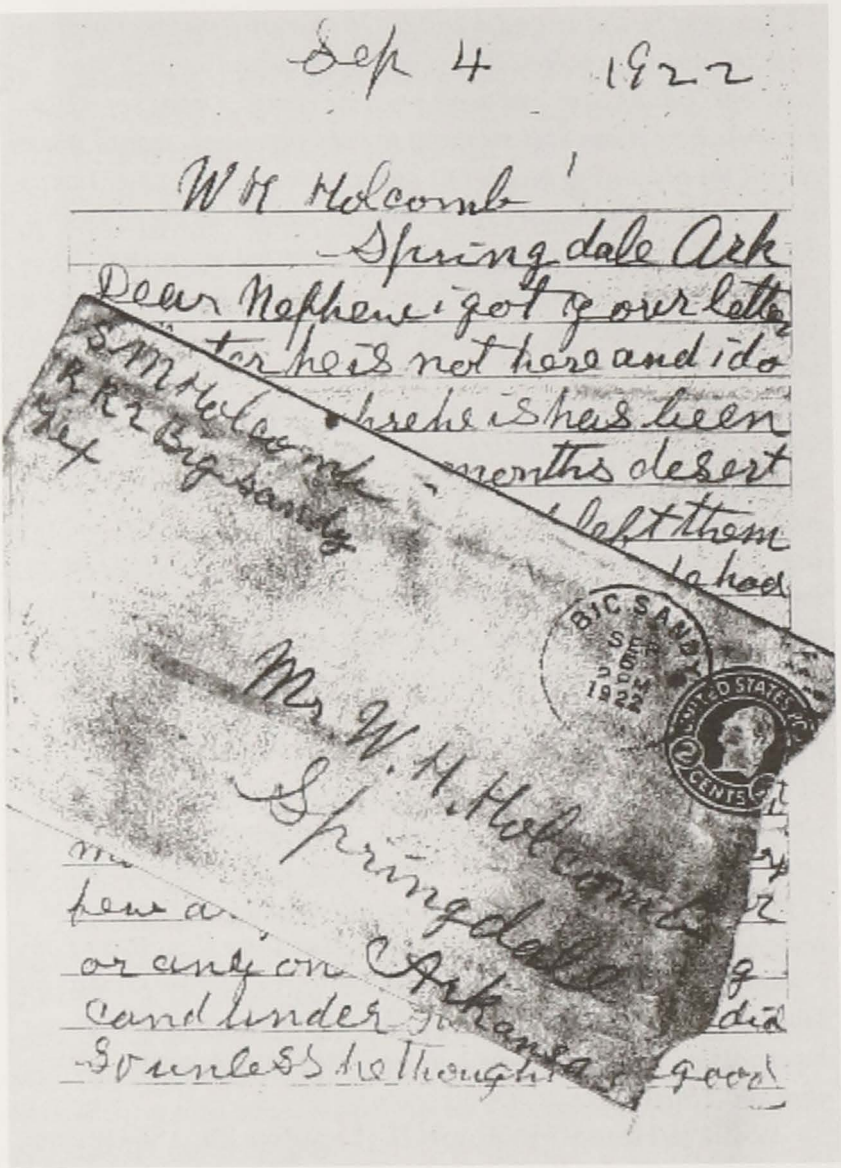
History becomes alive and meaningful as the personalities of our ancestors are revealed to us through personal documents, records, old letters, diaries, and related stories. An example is a letter written by Silas Mercer Holcomb to his nephew, William Henry Holcomb II, of Springdale, Ark. It is postmarked Big Sandy, Tex. , Sep 5, 2 P.M., 1922 with a return address of R. R. 2, Big Sandy Tex.

The letter is being shared through the courtesy of Joseph Holcomb Joiner of Atlanta GA , whose mother, Lillian Holcomb Joiner, daughter and second child of William Henry Holcomb II, had preserved it. The handwriting is very legible. The following transcription illustrates the format; using every bit of space on the paper with almost no punctuation or capital letters.

Sept 4 1922

W H Holcomb
Springdale, Ark.

Dear Nephew i got your letter to Porter he is not here and i dont know where he is has been gone about two months deserted his family and left them in a hard fix everything he had mortgaged for more than it will sell for he and his wife never had any trouble i think she is a fine woman and they dont make any better women and very few as good he never told her or any one he was leaveing cant understand why he did so unless he thought it a good way to pay his debts we made good corn cotton is sorry very dry and the hotest weather i ever saw anywhere Lee is here and John was in Kan[sas] the last I heard of him Charlie at Beaumont and Porter gone wher the woodvine turneth and the whany doodle mourneth for this first born you said you wished i had come up there i wish so too and if i



had known how things here was going to turn out i would have com and been there yet your Aunt Dollies address is Route 1, Box 8, Hulburt Okala [Oklahoma] i supose you have hear of Jim Bynums death he was about 81 years of age Dollie will be

78 her next birthday and I will be 76 her and me are the only ones left out of family of 8 boys and 8 girls and we will soon pass out i dont care how soon my time comes i dont see much pleasure here i am still smoking the old pipe stem would like to see all the old shiloh people but guess there are not many there i used to know the history of the Baptist church as given in the Springdale news is wrong your Grand Father organised that church and was pastor as long as he lived in the old double log-house across the creek he settled that placed and built the house and no one else ever lived in it if there ever was a Baptist there named Johnny Dodson i never heard of him there was one by the name of Tommie Dodson and a wedge of apple pie fit his mouth for three bites one day a dozen or 15 old preachers was eating diner at our house and us boys was waiting and starveing Uncle Tommie took the last peice of pie off the dish Gerge broke into a cry and said there old Tommie has got the last peace and i wont get any but he was wrong as there were about fifty left i remember several Baptist preachers that preached at old shilo Bobbie Young and Tommie Dodson lived in Richland Pass in Madison and other one i have forgotten his name lived at Little Flock Benton Co Will Ingram lived on West Fork will stop talking about preachers as it is not interesting to you and say something about the prety red cheeked girls that used to come to preaching in home made dress and hoops so big they would not go in the wagon bed girls was prettier them days than now i used to think Nancy Reed the pretiest girl i ever saw what has become of her if she is liveing bet she is pretty now and a good many others was good to look at will stop my nonsense write your old Uncle Silas

William Henry Holcomb II (October 29, 1861–June 22, 1935) was a prosperous farmer and business man residing approximately four miles west of Springdale, Arkansas, where he lived until his death. He was the seventh child of William Henry I (October 28, 1827–August 19, 1904) and Rebecca Baker Holcomb. William Henry

Holcomb I was the third child of Elder John Holcomb (December 10, 1797–December 9, 1876) and Dorothea Holcomb, reveals to us in his letter to his nephew unrecorded details of the historical past. He records for us that indeed Porter is his son. It also indicated that he had three other children, Lee, John, and Charlie. He refers to Aunt Dollie, Dorothy Holcomb Bynum, his sister two years older then he (July 2, 1845-1938) and the death of her husband, Jim Bynum, giving the location of their residency.

Revealing his early years at home, Silas Mercer writes "your Grand Father," Elder John Holcomb, and brings us back to the early days of Springdale, Ark. Many references are made in personal communication as to Baptist preachers being called "Uncle So-and so". Tommie Dodson was not a part of the family. George is Silas' younger brother, George Washington Holcomb (August 14, 1850- September 8, 1898), who became a physician, practicing extensively in surgery ending his career in Missouri.

Both Silas and the Springdale News were correct about Johnny Dodson—he moved to Springdale some time after Silas left there.

The Nancy Reed to whom Silas refers is probably Nancy Minerva Reed, daughter of John Reed and sister of Lewis Jarvis Reed of Springdale. She is recorded as joining the Missionary Baptist Church in 1870 which met near the Primitive Baptist Church where Silas attended. At this time she was 18 and he was a single man age 22 and still living at home.

Letter transcribed and notes added by Herbert G. Holcomb, a great-grandnephew of Silas Mercer Holcomb.

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Memorial Donations

These memorial donations to the Washington County Historical Society have been recently received.

In the name of
Morris G. Collier
by Keith and Jean Newhouse

In the name of
W. S. Campbell
by Blanche Campbell Hight

I read it in the paper . . .

Fayetteville Democrat
OCTOBER 3, 1868

It is a source of pride to the citizens of this place to see the improvements going on at this time. Besides two large two-story frame buildings lately completed on the public square, there are three large brick business houses going up which would do credit to any Southern city...the large and commodious court house is...progressing under the management of Mr. Hendry, the contractor. There are (in) addition to the above some ten or twelve residences going up in different parts of the city. Immigration to this place is considerable and would be much larger if residences could be procured. Some of our capitalists would make it profitable by investing in lots and improving for rent. Business houses and family residences are renting at good prices. Fayetteville as a business place is not only excelled but by few points in the state. Our merchants and mechanics are doing well in every branch of business and the ...of our town is clear of loafing.

Thurs. Dec 9, 1897

The Prairie Grove Battle was fought Dec. 7, 1862, which was 35 years ago today. Considering the number of men engaged it was one of the most destructive battles of the civil war, about 600 on both sides having been killed. Reports of battles in Cuba where 15 or 20 men were killed are given much prominence in the news from the stricken island, but the Prairie Grove battle receives scant mention in our histories. The fact that such a battle was considered so insignificant gives some idea of the magnitude of our civil war.

ISSN 0428-5573

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